

191
extend transversely through the batt in a range of angles, including angles that are non-perpendicular with respect to the surface of the batt.

27. (newly presented) A tennis ball according to claim 26, wherein the needlefelt comprises a plurality of fibers that extend transversely through the batt in opposite directions.

28. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 26, wherein the needlefelt comprises a scrim.

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29. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 28, wherein the batt is needled to the scrim.

30. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 26, wherein needlefelt has a fiber density that varies across its thickness.

31. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 30, wherein the fiber density of the needlefelt decreases from the base of the covering toward the external surface.

32. (newly presented) A method of manufacturing a tennis ball, comprising the steps of:

forming a needlefelt by passing a fiber batt through a needlefelting machine having at least one needleboard with barbed needles,

needlefelting the fiber batt such that the needles penetrate said web in a range of angles including a plurality of angles that are non-perpendicular with respect to the surface of the batt,

cutting or shaping said needlefelt to form a blank adapted at least partially to cover a resilient hollow core, and

adhering the blank to the resilient hollow core.

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33. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the batt is curved during needling, to provide the range of needle penetration angles.

34. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the needleboard is correspondingly curved.

35. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein two needleboards are respectively disposed to needle the batt from mutually opposite sides of the batt.

36. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the needlefelt includes a scrim.

37. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 36, wherein the batt is needed to the scrim.

38. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the needlefelt has a fiber density that varies across its thickness.

As Amended

39. (newly presented) A method as claimed in claim 38, wherein the fiber density of the needlefelt decreases from the base of the covering toward the external surface.

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40. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 27, wherein the batt weighs between 350 g/m² to 850 g/m².

41. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 40 wherein the batt comprises a mixture of wool and polyamide fibers.

42. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 29, wherein the scrim is a polyester or polyamide warp knit.

43. (newly presented) A tennis ball as claimed in claim 40, wherein the scrim has a weight of about 75 g/m².

REMARKS

Amendments

Claims 14-19 have been cancelled. Claims 26-43 are newly presented.

Support for newly presented claim 26 is found in original claims 14 and 15; on page 6, lines 22-30; and on page 8, lines 1-9 and 11-13. Support for newly presented claim 27 is found on page 7, lines 14-27. Support for newly presented claims 28 and 29 is found page 11, lines 5-7 and lines 27-32, and Figure 3. Support for newly presented claim 30 is found on page 13, lines 15-